

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

Representing More Than 2000 Families In The Blossom Valley Area Of South San Jose Since 1969

April 2001

VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY
April 24, 2001

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL
* FACULTY LOUNGE *

AGENDA

* Vista Park *

City Councilwoman **Pat Dando** &
City Parks Manager **Todd Capurso**
will discuss and answer questions on
the next step toward completing Vista Park.

* SummerHill Homes *

SummerHill's **Joe Head** & **Jon Revells**
unveil final plans for their housing development at
Branham Lane and Vistapark Drive.

* VEP Annual Meeting *

Annual reports and installation of incoming VEP officers.

* Your Issues and Concerns *

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

Our April 24th Meeting

-Dave Fadness

April is our *Annual Meeting* month, the meeting at which our members receive annual reports from outgoing officers and usher in a new year under the leadership of a newly elected Board. It will be a busy agenda and an extremely worthwhile meeting for you to attend. Plan on doing so.

We'll lead-off with a presentation on area parks by San Jose City Councilwoman **Pat Dando** and City Parks Manager **Todd Capurso**. Although Vista Park will be a primary focus, there is good news--and funding from the recently passed bond measure—for other parks in our district. (Both Pat and Todd have written articles that appear elsewhere in this newsletter.)

In a return visit as promised last January, SummerHill Homes representatives **Joe Head** and **Jon Revells** will then share final plans for their housing development on the old walnut orchard at Branham Lane and Vistapark Drive. (Revells has written an introductory article included elsewhere in this newsletter.) Their presentation will include responses to questions raised at the January 9th community

meeting, more detailed information on site development plans, information regarding ingress/egress on Vistapark Drive and Branham Lane, and elevation drawings of the homes they propose to build there. At this meeting, VEP will consider whether to support or oppose their plans.

As usual, there's always time on our agenda for you to speak up about issues or concerns near to your heart. That's how VEP learns about what needs to be done in our community and identifies its priorities for action.

Be sure to mark your calendars so you won't forget to attend. *Everyone* is welcome—bring a neighbor!

VEP dues reminder...

In April, VEP closes its fiscal year. That means that if you have not renewed your membership by this month, we will remove your name from our mailing list. Don't let it happen to you. If you haven't already done so, send in your \$15 family membership renewal today.

NOTICE

**If you haven't yet paid
your annual dues,
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Construction ahead: parks in VEP area

-Todd Capurso (*)

Vista Park: Vista is receiving parks bond measure money to renovate the existing tot lot (\$250,000). Additionally, Construction & Conveyance (C&C) tax funds (from Council District 10) and developer funds (another \$800,000) should allow for most of the next phase of the park to be completed.

This scope currently includes a play lot for the older children (ages 5-12), two ball fields, pathways, and lighting improvements. Complicating the scope of the this project is the poor condition of the existing irrigation system. Much of

the system is a hold-out from the old Belden days. A significant amount of funding will need to be used on upgrading this system.

So, we (the City and VEP) should be prepared to set some priorities at your April 24th meeting for this stage of development. If the new development on Vistapark and Branham proceeds, any funding from that project will be captured for further development at Vista.

Erickson Park: This park will receive bond money as well to renovate its play area. Additionally, C&C funds (from Council District 9) will be used for other improvements in the park. The design for this project is scheduled to begin in July. Construction should occur in spring 2002.

Meadows Park: In addition to the current project, this park will receive bond funding for two new play areas in fiscal year 2002-03. Design will begin in late spring 2002; with construction scheduled to begin in September 2002.

Parkview I Park: Same timeline as for Meadows Park, one play area being renovated.

Parkview II Park: This park will receive bond funding for two new play areas also in fiscal year 2002-03. Design will begin in late summer 2002; with construction scheduled to begin in March 2003.

Terrell Park and Thousand Oaks Park: Both of these parks also receive money from the parks bond for play area renovations. Design for these two will begin in fall 2004, with construction beginning in spring 2005.

Please remember that gathering public input is part of our design process. For each of these projects, the citizens should expect that at least one (more for complex projects) community meeting will be held. I would be happy to work with the VEP group on any and all of these projects as you see fit.

I look forward to seeing you all on April 24th.

[Ed. Note: Todd Capurso is Parks Manager for the City

of San Jose's Parks, Recreation, & Neighborhood Services Department. He and Councilwoman Dando will speak on parks development at VEP's April 24th meeting.]

Homes on tap for Vistapark @ Branham

-Jon Revells, SummerHill Homes

SummerHill Homes is proposing to develop approximately 80 single family homes on the northwest corner of Vistapark Drive and Branham Lane. Square footages will range from approximately 1,850 to 2,250. The proposed development will conform to the underlying General Plan of the City of San Jose, which was amended in the fall of 1999.

This development proposal has been submitted to the City of San Jose, and we anticipate that it will be heard by the Planning Commission and City Council this summer.

SummerHill Homes, based in Palo Alto, is widely considered as one of the pre-eminent homebuilders in California, with high-quality residential communities throughout the Bay Area.

VEP officers for 2001-2002

A new slate of officers was elected unanimously at our March meeting. Ready to guide VEP into its 33rd year and a new millennium, these volunteers will assume their official duties at the close of our Annual Meeting on April 24th:

President: **David Noel**

Vice-President: **Ian Reddy**

Secretary: **Sharon Pardun**

Treasurer: **Mark Schoenberg**

Newsletter co-Editors: **Bob Aquino & Dave Fadness**

Please be sure to join us that night in a showing of gratitude for outgoing officers and a gesture of support for these new leaders who will be working for you and your neighborhoods for the next twelve months:

Dave Noel: I've lived in this area most of my life. I grew up in Almaden, just down the street from the dairy where Castellero Middle School is now. I attended Simonds Elementary School, Bret Harte Junior High (now Middle School), Bellarmine College Preparatory, and even took summer school at Pioneer. Then I studied Electrical Engineering at Cal Poly Pomona, and it was there that I met my wife Maureen.

After college, we spent a few years in Santa Cruz, then settled in our current house in 1987. Our two sons Bryan and Justin went to Terrell Elementary School. Bryan is now in eighth grade at John Muir Middle School really enjoying the science and junior engineering curriculum, and Justin is in sixth grade at



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Castillero Middle School enjoying a curriculum that nurtures his interests in the arts.

Phil Bejar introduced me to VEP several years back. I wasn't able to attend the meetings very often since they were at the same time as my Indian Guides Longhouse meetings. My sons and I were very active in the Guides. I was tribe chief for three years, and also served as nation Tally keeper then Assistant Chief for two of those years. After running two camp-outs for about 200 people at Camp Campbell one year, I began to yearn for some volunteer time off.

When my sons graduated from the Guides, I became a regular attendee at VEP meetings. It didn't take long for Dave Fadness and Greg West to notice I might have some time for a new volunteer activity, and next thing I knew I was Vice President of VEP! They assured me there was no assumed succession plan; I didn't necessarily have to worry about being getting tapped for president.

I've really enjoyed my two years as Vice President. I have the utmost respect for our executive board and stand in awe of their collective accomplishments, longevity, reputation and integrity. I'm proud to be associated with VEP and the executive board, and look forward to serving as your president.

Ian Reddy: Three years ago my family and I moved from a suburb of Vancouver, Canada, to our current home in Vistapark. We consider ourselves fortunate to be able to raise two daughters and a son in this clean, safe neighborhood of caring and friendly residents.

I have been employed in the information technology field for over eighteen years, many of them at my alma mater Simon Fraser University, and have worked in both public and private sectors. My interests include sailing, fishing, and camping though, whether at home or away, I enjoy time spent with my family and friends most of all.

I have been involved in numerous volunteer and community activities all my life and am pleased to now have this opportunity to serve as VEP's Vice-President. I look forward to working with the VEP board and membership, its neighborhoods and neighbors, in furthering VEP's fine record of service and accomplishments.

Sharon Pardun: I look forward to continuing into a second term as the VEP Board Secretary. My family moved into the VEP area in September of 1998 after having owned a townhome in Willow Glen for fifteen years. We had a HOA in the townhome complex that created far more problems than it ever resolved. Needless to say, I was very upset when I found out that we had bought a home in an area with another homeowner's association.

That was until I found out it was VEP. Working for the City of San Jose under various council-appointedees for the last 20 years, I became aware many years ago that VEP was a force to be reckoned with and had the attention of the City Council. It's great to be part of an association that can get things done, has such a great history of community activism, and many outstanding and knowledgeable past and present officers. I'm very pleased to be part of a great neighborhood and community.

[Ed. Note: Mark Schoenberg's bio will appear in our May edition of the NEWS.]

We're now VEP **Community** Association

-Greg West

Members in attendance at our March meeting unanimously approved changes to our Constitution and By-Laws. This is the first major revision to the C&BL's since they were written and the first changes in more than ten years. The new C&BL's more accurately reflect what is commonly held to be the mission of our organization and the way we have done business for the last several years, while maintaining the essential qualities of our organization. They allow us to consider historical perspectives without being overpowered by tradition in our actions and decision making.

The most obvious change is to our name. Instead of VEP Homeowners Association, we have become **VEP Community Association**. We did this because the term "community association" more accurately reflects the purpose and mission of our organization as stated in Article I of our Constitution:

"This organization shall strive to effectively express the views of the homeowners and residents on vital issues. This organization shall also strive to promote: the expressed desires of our membership; community preservation and development, both physical and social; and volunteerism and civic involvement within our neighborhoods."

Although we are an association primarily of

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homeowners, the term "homeowners' association" has a specific meaning in tax law that we do not meet, and also implies that we have mandatory dues, common property, and codes, covenants, and restrictions (CC&Rs) on properties in our membership area. VEP has none of these.

There are proper homeowners' associations, such as Willow Glen II HOA, within our membership area that do have mandatory dues, CC&Rs and common property. People have confused us with these other HOAs over the years. I should note here that, although VEP does not have CC&Rs, homes in our membership area are bound by City of San Jose Codes and Ordinances.

Although we've changed from VEPHOA to VEPCA, our "brand name," or the name that people recognize by, is still **VEP**, as it has been for more than 30 years. Today, we are still the same neighbors sharing common interests and with a desire to constantly defend and improve our neighborhoods, as we were yesterday. But, now we have a charter that more accurately reflects our mission and the way we do business.

The board needs to do many things to actually implement the name change. We need to change our stationary (fortunately, we are very close to needing to reorder stationary and envelopes), change our name at the bank and with other people that we do business with, and get our name changed on the several mailing lists that we are on for notices and information from government agencies. This will take some time. We



hope to have the name change fully implemented by the end of the year. But please bear with us in the meantime.

VEP selection committee needs you

-Dave Noel

Each year VEP honors two graduating high school students for outstanding volunteer community service. This year our membership has approved awarding \$1000 each to one student from Gunderson High School and one student from Andrew Hill High School for use in any post-secondary education or occupational training program. The VEP executive board needs your help in selecting the 2001 *Community Service Award* winners.

Here's how it works: Administrators from each school submit 3 to 5 (or more) nominations to VEP in early May. The selection committee chairperson whites-out all words that reveal the student's identity. These modified copies of the letters are then distributed to the selection committee, mainly by email. Each member votes for their top choices, then the committee chairperson tallies the votes. If the votes are close, a run-off is held until the top vote-getter from each school has been selected.

I invite you to join us in this rewarding task. You'll be amazed at the volunteer community service these students have performed. If you can spare about an hour, we'd appreciate your help. This can all be done from home, so you won't have to attend any meetings. If you don't have email, don't let that stop you. We will accommodate you.

To volunteer for this brief, one-shot assignment, call me or any VEP officer listed on mailing page of this newsletter.

Neighborhoods First!

-Pat Dando, San Jose City Councilmember

I would like to share some exciting news with you about improvement projects in your community. Following a great deal of community input, I am happy to report that I have worked hard to improve your neighborhood!

Median Island Landscaping on Branham Lane

As you may have recently noticed, there is landscape work being done along Branham Lane between Heppner Lane & Highway 87. This project will include the planting of trees in the median island, which will enhance Branham Lane and provide a beautiful gateway into your neighborhood. The project is scheduled for completion in August 2001.

Branham-Route 87 Overcrossing Beautification

After many years of working with the San Jose Redevelopment Agency, I am happy to inform you that landscape improvements to the over-crossing at Route 87 and Branham Lane should be completed this summer. The project will beautify the southeast slope of the overcrossing. Sixty trees with irrigation will be planted on the embankment providing privacy to the homes that back up to the area while beautifying this section of Branham Lane. The existing chain link fence located at the top of the slope will be removed once the trees have taken root. Also, the existing gutter will be rebuilt to allow for a bicycle and pedestrian path to

connect to the existing pedestrian path along Route 87 while providing drainage for the new irrigation system.

Narvaez Avenue Landscape Project

For some time, I have been working to improve the entry into the Narvaez neighborhood from Capitol Expressway. This project will provide median island landscaping on Narvaez Avenue from Capitol Expressway to Naomi Court. Median landscaping will improve the appearance of the neighborhood at this key gateway. Construction is scheduled to begin in August and be completed by early February 2002.

Meadows Park

Following years of discussions, Meadows Park is moving forward with improvements. Meadows will receive new trees, lighting, turf installation, minor grading and drainage improvements along with the installation of additional benches and picnic tables. These renovations are scheduled for completion by the beginning of May 2001.

Vista Park

At the April 10th City Council meeting, my colleagues joined me in approving the consultant services for the Vista Park Renovation Project. Plans are currently being drawn for the next phase of Vista Park. Some of the features included in this renovation are sports fields that can be used for softball or soccer, a tot lot, new youth lot, picnic area with BBQ pits, and security lighting.

Improved Waste Collection



As you may be aware, I have been working for some time towards better garbage and yard waste collection services. At our March 27th meeting, the City Council unanimously approved a new residential waste collection program. This new program promises to deliver quality service to all San Jose

residents.

Many District 10 residents have complained over the years about the yard waste pick up. The most frequent concern is the mess the yard waste leaves on the street and the damage to the street caused by the "waste scoop." In addition, many residents are concerned about yard waste being washed from the streets into the storm drains, causing flooding.

So, I hope you will be pleased to learn of two enhancements to your service. I have worked to include the option of an oversized yard waste container that residents may purchase. We had a pilot program of these containers in a segment of District 10 and it was very well received by the neighborhood. In addition, under the new service, streets will receive street sweeping service twice per month. Streets will be swept on the work day following your yard waste collection.

Brian Bonnifield

Real Estate Consultant

VEP Member - Area Specialist

Call me with your Real Estate Questions

Direct: 408-979-2828

Home: 408-226-6004

Email: brian@brianbonnifield.com

For Real Estate information visit me on the world wide web

Website: <http://www.brianbonnifield.com>

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The new program is scheduled to begin July 1, 2002. Information regarding your collection schedule will be released this summer.

* * *

If you would like further information on the items discussed in this update, or would like to receive future updates via e-mail, please contact my office at (408) 277-5251. I can also be reached via e-mail at pat.dando@ci.sj.ca.us.

VEP's Home Improvement Faire

Our fifth annual **Home Improvement Faire** is scheduled for Tuesday, May 22nd in the Forum area at Gunderson High School. Instead of searching all over town for ideas and the craftsmen needed to do that home improvement job you've been putting off, come to our 7:30 p.m. meeting and meet them all under one roof.

VEP's Faire is free to anyone who wishes to attend. You'll meet representatives from 18-20 different firms who will set up booths to display their products and specialties. Exhibitors include businesses that advertise in our newsletter and/or have been recommended by VEP members who have used them. These vendors will be happy to share their experience and answer your questions.

This is a sampling of the areas of home improvement specialties we'll feature:

- Painting
- Roofing
- Insulation
- Plumbing/Re-piping
- Electrical wiring
- Fencing
- Pool care
- Windows, doors, and siding
- Kitchen and bath remodeling
- General construction
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Mark your calendars now so you won't forget to be there at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, May 22nd. Join your neighbors for refreshments and an enjoyable evening. Bring a friend!

Share Your Talent

-John Marks

Elementary schools can use your help in tutoring first, second and third graders in math. This is an ideal use of your talents, especially if you're retired.

The Katherine R. Smith Elementary School, located just across Tully Road from Eastridge, has need of tutors for just 45 minutes per visit, two days a week. You can choose either morning or afternoon, and any day but Thursday. The teacher supplies a kit of tools for you to use, with no more than three children at a time. You will be amply rewarded, as you see the lights go on in a child's eyes when they suddenly comprehend.

For more information, call me at 629-6433, or the Assistant Principal, Brad Yee at 270-6751.

Neighborhood Developments

-Dave Fadness

You may have noticed that the large field in the northwest quadrant of the Almaden Expressway/Route 85 interchange is being graded. This is being done in preparation for building two new stores: a Home Expo and a Best Buy. Access to and from these facilities will be off Almaden Expressway. The westernmost portion of that parcel will be retained for future development of apartments or condominiums.

The 200 remaining units of 535 being built at the Ohlone-Chynoweth light rail station are now presently under construction. Located at the end of Pearl Avenue, just south of Chynoweth, these will be "market-rate" (as opposed to subsidized "affordable") apartments. Despite construction delays, the owner now forecasts leasing first-completed units beginning this August, with a project completion target of January 2002.

Biotechnology Academy at Andrew Hill

The *Biotechnology Academy* is the newest addition to the *Andrew P. Hill High School Medical/Health Professions Magnet*. This academy is a three-year program dedicated to producing students with skills necessary to enter the workforce and college. We are currently in our second year of operation with 96 students. We have a core group of seven teachers dedicated to working with students in this program.

During their sophomore year, students will have an opportunity to listen to guest speakers from the biotechnology industry and go on field trips to learn about biotechnology. In their junior year, students will take Chemistry with a Biotech focus in preparation for their summer internships in the biotechnology industry. Students will also meet with a mentor once a month from the biotechnology industry. In their senior year, students will take Biotechnology to refine their skills, and they will participate in the Agilent after-school community outreach program.

Upon graduation from the Biotechnology Academy, students will have a choice to enter the career or continue on to college. We have articulation agreements with San Jose City College and Foothill College. We are also working with Santa Clara University and San Jose State University. They each have certified Biotech Certificate Programs and/or Tech/Prep Programs.

Populations served include all students—both male and female students, as well as those with special needs. Students will also be chosen based upon their "at-risk" status, which is based upon the inclusion of at least three of the following criteria: past record of irregular attendance; past record of underachievement, in which the student is at least one year behind in coursework for the respective grade level; past record of low motivation or a disinterest in the regular school program; disadvantaged economically. Andrew P. Hill High School is demographically 49% Latino, 32% Vietnamese, 5% Filipino, 7% White, 5% Afro-American, 2% Other Asian.

In addition to relationships with the community colleges with which there are articulation agreements, the Biotechnology Academy also has ties to biotechnology industries. We are proud to include the following businesses: Kaiser Foundation, Alza Corporation, Stanford DNA Sequencing and Technology Center, Workforce Silicon Valley, Genentech, Incyte, Genecor, Applied Biosystems, Agilent Technologies, and the Agilent After School Program.

Over the past year, students have been acknowledged to be respectful, hard working individuals by industry associates. Students have been asked to return to

Incyte to complete their summer internships. All students participated in two interdisciplinary projects that used skills learned in all core classes. Students are participating in a mentor program now, and students will participate in a community outreach program with the Agilent After-School Science Program in the last semester of their senior year.

The Biotechnology Academy received money to purchase equipment from Genentech in South San Francisco. Alza Corporation and Santa Clara University donated equipment. Agilent will fund a grant for \$30,000 towards teacher training and donate equipment as well. Agilent will also work with the Biotechnology Academy to implement a community outreach program by having Academy seniors mentor and teach science to students at Sylvandale Middle School through the Agilent after-school program.

The \$30,000 grant from Agilent will fund teacher training and give teachers the extra time needed to participate in this "school within a school" program. Teachers meet once a week to discuss student progress. We currently staff an after-school tutoring program where students are required to go for help if needed. We also work to integrate the curriculum. Biotechnology is the career path and teachers participate in various internships to prepare themselves for teaching lab techniques particular to biotechnology within their science classes.

Gunderson multimedia design art show

-Felicia Webb, Gunderson High School

Gunderson High School's Technology program will present its first annual multimedia design art show this month. Many students have flourished in Gunderson's multimedia program and, on May 16th, these students will have the opportunity to share their hard work and accomplishments with the community.

The event will begin at 6:30 pm with hors d'oeuvres and a gallery showing of student artwork. We will have a presentation in the theatre of commercials and videos created by our more advanced students, and you will have a chance to mingle with the artists and discuss their work. The evening will end at 8:00 pm.

The majority of artwork you will see at this event was created using a variety of Adobe software, the industry standard for computer graphic design and video editing. You simply cannot miss this opportunity to view our students' outstanding work that ranges from print work to short films to web pages. Please come and join us for this wonderful evening!

Highway construction ahead!

-Dave Fadness

Highway construction will be everywhere evident as we approach the summer months this year. Funded by the

½-cent (Measure B) local sales tax we've been paying the past few years, these projects will have a direct, hopefully positive impact on VEP members' lives.

Route 85/87 interchange: Work to complete the Route 85/87 interchange will begin in July. This interchange was one of the victims of funding shortfalls in the original 1984 sales tax measure. Planned connector ramps for southbound Route 85 to northbound Route 87 and southbound Route 87 to northbound Route 85 will now be added.

As part of this project, a pair of commuter lanes will be added (one in each direction) adjacent to the median of Route 87 between Route 85 and Branham Lane. (These two lanes will become a part of widened Route 87, providing commuter lane facilities from Route 85 to Route 101 within the next few years.) An extended merge lane will also be constructed for traffic entering northbound Route 87 from Santa Teresa Boulevard.

One of the immediate negative impacts will be a one-year closure of the east park-n-ride lot at the Ohlone-Chynoweth light rail station. This is necessary in order to provide a staging area for interchange construction activity and to minimize pedestrian access under the bridgework. A temporary parking lot will be constructed west of the LRT station, along Chynoweth Avenue.

Completion of this \$51-million combined project is scheduled for spring of 2003.

Route 85/101 interchange: First in Santa Clara County to offer direct connections between HOV lanes will be the Route 85/101 interchange here in South San Jose. This \$58.3-million project is slated to begin in August. When completed in late 2003, ridesharing commuters will have a continuous, non-stop HOV facility from Gilroy to San Mateo County via Routes 85 and 101. Imagine: no freeway-to-freeway ramp meters for ridesharing motorists!

In conjunction with widening of Route 101 to 8-lanes (see below; also set to begin this summer), direct HOV fly-over connections will be constructed for northbound 101 to northbound 85, southbound 85 to southbound



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101, and southbound 101 to northbound 85. A new bridge will be built at Bernal Road; it too will have direct HOV links to n/b and s/b Route 85.

The only direct HOV link that is currently not funded is southbound 85 to northbound 101. Due to its extreme length, this is the most expensive fly-over. Local officials are trying to secure funding, as construction concurrent with the rest of this project would make best sense—and probably cost far less now than it will in the future.

Route 101 widening: I was there years ago for the grand opening of new 4-lane Route 101, the “Blood-Alley by-pass” freeway that took dangerous traffic off Monterey Road (remember those days?). In his dedication speech that day, the director of Caltrans offered an urgent plea to begin lobbying for the other four lanes! Alas, those lanes will soon become a reality.

Contract award for construction is expected in June to widen 101 to eight lanes from Cochrane Road to Metcalf Road (where the Route 85/101 interchange project, described above, will complete the widening to Bernal Road). Two of these new lanes will be HOV (commuter) lanes. All four new lanes will be built within the existing highway median. Completion of this fairly straightforward project is targeted for late 2003.

Route 152 safety improvements: Long one of the most deadly roads in California, this busy intra-state link from Route 101 to the central valley is slated for a handful of modest safety improvements that will hopefully reduce congestion as well. While motorists die there, Caltrans has been in analysis-paralysis for decades, avoiding major investments in the current route while seeking an ultimate but perennially elusive freeway alignment to replace the existing stretch between Gilroy and Route 156.

Much credit for safety improvements on this treacherous two-way route is attributable to tenacious efforts by ordinary south-county citizens (some who are widows and relatives of head-on crash victims). As a result of their persistence, when Measures A & B were passed here in 1996, money was earmarked for continued efforts to make this road safer.

Chief among the \$16.2-million improvements will be a new loop-ramp off southbound 101 onto Route 152. This new ramp will eliminate a left turn movement onto 152 for southbound travelers, increasing throughput and thereby reducing the tendency for traffic to back up onto 101 on busy days. 152 will be widened easterly from 101 to Llagas Creek. A new traffic signal will be installed at Gilroy Foods. Intersections at Frazier Lake Road, Furlong Road, and Ferguson Road will be modified to improve visibility and turning safety. A truck-climbing lane will be added on 152 westbound from Highway 156.

Work is set to begin near the end of 2002. Completion

is scheduled for first-quarter 2004.

Book giveaway and sales

-John Marks & Dave Fadness

You can obtain books free of charge through a book recycling effort conducted by the City of San Jose four times a year. Library discards and donated books are sorted by category at the city's warehouse located at 1661 Senter Road, across from Kelly Park. (This is the location of the former Beechnut Baby Food factory.)

The Book Giveaway is held from 9 am to noon on the Saturday mornings of May 12, June 23, September 15, and November 10 this year. Anyone can pick up as many books as they want on those dates.

For questions, call Leonard Perez, Recycle Technician, 918-7896.

* * *

The San Jose Public Library holds quarterly sales of used books, their way of making room for new editions and more recent bestsellers. These sales are held at the downtown Martin Luther King Library, 180 W. San Carlos Street.

You can buy a bagful of used books for only \$5. Individual books are 25¢ for paperbacks, 50¢ for hardbacks. They ask that you please bring your own grocery-sized plastic or paper bags. There is no limit to how many books you may buy.

Their next sale is April 25th -28th. Sales from 5 to 8 pm on April 25th are limited to teachers and members of the *Friends of the San Jose Library* only. (You can join the *Friends* at the door—membership costs only \$5 per individual or \$10 per family per year.) Sales on April 26th through 28th are open to the general public between 10 am and 4 pm.

You can get there easily on light rail; get off at the Convention Center stop. If you drive, park in the Convention Center garage. Enter the garage off Almaden Blvd, one block south of San Carlos Street. Parking validation is available in the library.

Future used book sales this year will be held July 25-28 and October 24-27.

For your information, used books are sold year-round in the **Best Friends Bookstore** (408.275.1515), a facility in the main library operated by the non-profit *Friends of the San Jose Library*.

The Safe School Campus Initiative

-Ed Solis (*)

The Safe School Campus Initiative is a comprehensive response protocol that enables city, schools, law enforcement agencies, community based organizations, and other gang specialists to collaborate

as a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT). An MDT is authorized to share confidential information pursuant to state law (830.1 Welfare and Institution Code) for the purpose of prevention, identification, and control of youth violence on and around public school campuses.

The primary goal of the Safe School Campus Initiative is to prevent and, if necessary, help manage critical incidents of youth violence, crime, or criminal street gang activity. Its main objective is to assist schools in creating and maintaining an environment or level of safety for students, staff, and members of the surrounding communities. This is accomplished through early response to or intervention in potentially violent situations.

How does the Safe School Campus Initiative help develop safety in schools and surrounding communities? It establishes formalized safety partnerships through the development of a safety Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT). Use of the common multi-system protocol helps establish effective communication and the development of unified school safety policies and critical response procedures. Of primary importance to schools and school districts are resources provided by the Safe School Campus Initiative. When properly coordinated, these resources enhance the capacity of school safety teams to resolve high-risk situations involving juvenile violence or crime.

Basically we share information about crime in and around schools. When there is trouble in the community, it tends to spill into schools and vice-versa. We collaborate with schools, PRNS, SJPD, probation, the DA's office and most community based organizations. We talk about issues and trends that effect communities and schools to prevent, intervene, and when needed suppress violence.

[()Ed. Note: Ed Solis is Community Coordinator of Youth Intervention Services for the City of San Jose Department of parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services. He was a panelist at our March 27th meeting discussion of school and community safety.]*

President's Corner

-Greg West

My last President's Corner! All I can think of to say is "Thanks!" First of all, thanks to our membership, both to the folks that have been continuous members of the VEP community for many, many years, and to the folks that have just come into the neighborhood in the past couple of years, for giving me this opportunity to serve you and to grow with our community.

Thanks to the many wonderful volunteers that I have worked with on the projects that we've done as a neighborhood. We may not always have the best meeting attendance, but when we need to get something done in the neighborhood, folks always step

up to get it done, whether the task be pruning and watering trees, picking up trash along the freeway, manning dumpsters on "Dumpster Days", delivering flyers in the neighborhood about important community issues, working on the WEB, lobbying City Hall, or helping out at schools in our neighborhood.

Thanks to our elected officials and their staffs for working with us to resolve important community issues and to the public employees that we occasionally butt heads with, but still serve our neighborhoods courteously and professionally.

Thanks to the leadership of our neighboring community organizations with which we have occasionally banded together to address common issues and concerns, and with which we have held very successful joint activities.

Thanks to the staff at Gunderson High School, particularly Sharon and Jose, for insuring that our meeting place is available and ready for our monthly meetings. Having a consistent meeting place and time is a key to successful meetings for any organization.

Thanks to some of my predecessors, particularly to Jane Elkins and John Marks, for the counsel, advice, and encouragement that they gave me early on.

Thanks to the outstanding group of folks that have served with me on the Board; David Noel, Jeri Arstingstall, Sharon Pardun, Brian Bonnifield, Bob Aquino, and especially Dave Fadness, for their continuous and ongoing energy, effort, and support of this wonderful organization. And thanks to the Board members' spouses, Maureen Noel, Walter Arstingstall, Marty Pardun, Marilyn Bonnifield, Barbara Aquino, and Aiko Fadness for allowing the Board to invade their homes occasionally for Board meetings and for their understanding and support of the organization.

Finally, and especially, thanks to my wife and life partner, Robin, for her support, understanding, patience, counsel, guidance and love over the past three years and always.

Computer Corner

-Bob Aquino, VEP's Computer Guru

The web really brings the world into your home. I thought it would be interesting to survey some of the useful things that you can do on it. These are free, and all of them are useful.

Research a subject. This is the most obvious, and all the students are probably aware of the breadth of information on the web. To access that mountain of data, it's necessary to use a search engine. My personal favorite is at www.google.com. For instance, when I wrote an article on Bluetooth, I found an abundance of references. The trick here is to limit the non-relevant information. I'd use the Advanced option

to put as many constraints as possible.

Find an old friend. Many of the Internet portals provide a people finder. I've had the best luck with Excite although, since the various portals use different databases, if you can't find the person on one, you may locate them on another.

Plan a menu. There are lots of recipe sites, but the top of the line is www.epicurious.com. They have a pretty good search engine. They have archived recipes from *Bon Appetit* and *Gourmet* magazines. The magazines that publish recipes, such as *Sunset* also will provide some help

Get a map or directions. I use Yahoo to map out an auto trip to an unfamiliar location. Just type in the addresses for the to and from locations, and you'll get a map and detailed directions.

Find a hotel or restaurant. Again, you can use Internet portals which will typically have some information, but I'd be skeptical, since their references are likely to be advertisers. Try google, using the phrase "hotel directory" or "restaurant directory" and requiring a reference to the city you are visiting.

To check on the weather. To get the latest data, try www.nws.noaa.gov for the national weather service, or www.accuweather.com or use www.weather.com. This is also useful for planning what clothing to take on a trip.

Get a Tax form. It's probably too late to do it this year, but all forms for the IRS are available at www.irs.gov. They also have a service for tax advice. It's really helpful. For California forms go to www.ftb.ca.gov.

Find unclaimed property. There is a clearing house for unclaimed property, which generally means interest or dividend payments for which the payer can't locate the payee. Try www.unclaimed.com.

There are plenty of other things out there. If you have any favorite free sites, let me know at baquino@bobaquino.com.

Ride VTA Light Rail to Summertime Fun

-John Pilger ()*

Family fun is only a train ride away when you use the Ohlone-Chynoweth Light Rail Station to access Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) services.

Head north on the Santa Teresa to Baypointe Light Rail Line and you quickly arrive at Tamien Station, where easy transfer to Caltrain service is available. One popular summertime destination for families riding Caltrain is Pacific Bell Park, home of the San Francisco Giants. In late July, taking Caltrain south to the Gilroy Garlic Festival is a good way to avoid parking hassles.

Here's another suggestion: a few stops further along the light rail line in Downtown San Jose is the Children's Discovery Museum Station, with the museum only a few short steps from the stop. One stop later at the Convention Center Station is the main City of San Jose Library.

Tired of fighting traffic congestion at the airport? Then take light rail to the Metro/Airport transfer point, where VTA provides a free shuttle service to San Jose International Airport. This shuttle also provides access to Amtrak service at the Santa Clara Transit Center.

A final suggestion: family and friends can easily use VTA light rail to get to Great America in Santa Clara. There is a light rail station directly outside the park.

Do you want more information regarding fares, schedules and routes for all VTA operations? VTA has all the information on its web page at www.vta.org. You can also call VTA Customer Service at (408) 321-2300, hearing impaired (TDD only) at (408) 321-2330.

About VTA

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is an independent special district responsible for bus, light rail and paratransit operations; congestion management; specific highway improvement projects; and countywide transportation planning. As such, VTA is both an accessible transit provider and multi-modal transportation planning organization involved with transit, highways and roadways, bikeways and pedestrian facilities.

[()Ed. Note: John Pilger is VTA's Public Information Manager. He wrote this article for the VEP News.]*

It's tomato time

-John Marks, VEP's Green Gardener
"There's only two things money can't buy. That's true love and homegrown tomatoes," wrote singer-songwriter Guy Clark. Those of you who have tasted a lip-smackingly ripe tomato fresh from the vine will agree. Tomatoes are the most popular crop for backyard gardens--about 90 percent of vegetable gardeners grow them. Even folks who don't have vegetable gardens grow tomatoes. A half-dozen plants thriving in pots on a sunny deck can supply a family of four with a summer of good eating. Growing tomato plants is easy, and the rewards are well worth the effort. Nothing beats your own vine-ripened beauties. You'll probably wish you had planted more.



Experiment first with just a few plants; each one can produce 10 to 15 pounds of fruit. To get the best results with the least effort, choose plants with straight, stocky stems about 6 to 10 inches tall. Plant tomatoes in well-drained soil where they will receive sun all day long. When planting, work a complete fertilizer, such as 5-10-

10 or 5-20-20, into the upper 6 inches of soil, following package directions. Space plants 24 to 36 inches apart. Remove the plant from its container, pinch off the lower leaves and set it in a deep planting hole so the roots and stem are buried up to the first set of leaves. Roots will form along the buried portion of the stem, resulting in a strong plant.

Stake or cage the plant soon after planting so as not to disturb the developing roots later. Tie plants to their support as they grow. Pull off the lower branches that form, as they are suckers, bleeding energy from the plant; snapping off the suckers will ensure healthy growth of the top, fruit-producing part of the plant. Water through the entire growing season to keep the soil moist, and fertilize regularly. Depending on variety, you can expect red, ripe tomatoes as soon as six weeks after planting.

TIP OF THE MONTH

Now that the rains are just about over, the ground is hardening, making it harder to pull those healthy weeds. Before trying, get the hose out and flood the ground surrounding weeds; then the roots will come up readily.

DANDELION ALERT

This year has by far the heaviest crop of dandelions I have seen. So, get a head start on next year by plucking every dandelion that you see blooming in your lawn before it goes to seed. If you don't, it'll go to seed as soon as you look away.

GARDENING ON THE WEB

If you're not surfing the web for gardening ideas, you should be. I get a lot of my stuff from todayshomeowner.com. Another source is tulipworld.com; the clock on this site gives "Amsterdam time" in tulips. You'll get suggestions on flowering bulb plants that will thrive there, and tips on when and how to put bulbs in the ground. It's time for bulbs NOW.

An all-new edition of "Ortho's Home Gardener's Problem Solver" is available online at bhg.com. This reference will help you diagnose a problem and figure out the right solution. It lists more than 700 pest, disease, and cultural plant problems (as if you didn't have enough, already!).

TOOLS FOR THE ELDERLY

If your bones and joints ache and you can't bend over easily or get back up, here's a tool for you! A firm named Corona has new extendable-handle tools that are lightweight and can extend from 18 to 32 inches, for easier access to weeds and mulching in the garden. They include a rake, a three-tine hoe, cultivator and trowel.

They have cherry-red handles, black comfort grips, and high-carbon, non-rusting steel. There's also a handy ring, so you can easily hang the tool from a nail. These tools are sold at Orchard Supply and in some

nurseries, priced at about \$12.95.

FREE LILLIES

Red Canna lilies that grow to four feet tall are free for the asking. Plants take full sun and spread like Irises. Call John at 629-6433.

Redistricting update

-Dave Fadness

At last, we have census numbers from the feds! California was the last state to receive counts that will allow us to proceed with redrawing voting districts.

City District	1990 Population	2000 Population	Change ('90 to '00)	Variation from District Mean	% Variation from Mean
1	77,842	85,180	7,338	-4,314	-4.8
2	79,185	87,676	8,491	-1,818	-2.0
3	76,277	83,256	6,979	-6,238	-7.0
4	79,716	97,515	17,799	+8,021	+9.0
5	79,804	93,776	13,972	+4,282	+4.8
6	76,986	85,760	8,774	-3,734	-4.2
7	80,135	95,028	14,893	+5,534	+6.2
8	77,649	100,596	22,947	+11,102	+12.4
9	76,616	79,496	2,880	-9,998	-11.2
10	78,038	86,660	8,622	-2,834	-3.2
Totals:	782,248	894,943	112,695		

According to the federal count, San Jose's official population is 894,943. So, the mean (year 2000) population for our ten city council districts is 89,494.

City District	2000 Population	Comparison to 5% Deviation from Mean	Redistricting Implication: District must...	Min. Population Change Req'd to Satisfy 5% Deviation
1	85,180	Below	Expand	+2,077
2	87,676	Within	None	0
3	83,256	Below	Expand	+4,001
4	97,515	Above	Contract	-5,783
5	93,776	Above	Contract	-2,044
6	85,760	Below	Expand	+1,497
7	95,028	Above	Contract	-3,296
8	100,596	Above	Contract	-8,864
9	79,496	Below	Expand	+7,761
10	86,660	Below	Expand	+597

This is how the census numbers shake down for our city:

If we use an allowable 5% total deviation (i.e., $\pm 2.5\%$) from the mean, each district will have to fall between 87,257 and 91,732 people. This assumption leads to

the following tabulated conclusions:

As you can see, our District 10 grew pretty close to the average for the city as a whole. As a result, we'd only have to add 597 people to our district to be within the 5% margin. However, District 9 (the Cambrian area, which lies to the west of us) is way below the mean population, so will have to add at least 7761 people. Its boundaries can only move east, south, or north. This fact may have a major impact on the shape of District 10, potentially shifting areas like VEP that are at or near existing boundaries into a different council district. Being closer to District 9, Thousand Oaks and Pinehurst are more immediately threatened by the possibility of being redistricted than we are.

VEP's adopted goal is to remain within District 10. We have significant historical ties with other organizations here (like the Almaden Valley Community Association) and an excellent working relationship with our council office and staff. We also have historic bonds with the Thousand Oaks and Pinehurst organizations. Our membership area has for years been fractured by congressional, state senatorial and assembly, and school district boundaries. In 1991 we were finally united in one council district, a benefit we do *not* want to lose.

A first-cut at district realignment to meet the above minimum population changes will be brought forward by City Planning staff at the Redistricting Advisory Committee's April 18th meeting. The RAC will weigh impacts of staff's proposal against a variety of acceptance criteria, including but not limited to the following:

- Compliance with all federal, state, and local laws;
- Minimizing dilution of votes (avoiding fragmentation or over-compaction of ethnic communities);
- Avoid splitting cohesive, organized neighborhoods;
- Avoid gerrymandering;
- Maintain integrity of existing school district boundaries;
- Maintain integrity of existing council district boundaries;
- Strive for overall good of the city vs good of district alone;
- Attempt to spread public facilities evenly among districts.

Staff's recommendations and modifications by the RAC will be the subject of a second public hearing on April 25th. This 7 p.m. meeting will be held in Room M2 at Silver Creek High School. The final public hearing will be held at 7 p.m. on May 9th at the Willows Senior Center. You are urged to attend.

For further information, visit the Redistricting website at <http://www.ci.san-jose.ca-us/redistricting/>

Gunderson High Golf Tournament

-Bob Burns, Gunderson Athletic Booster Club
A golf tournament is being sponsored by the Gunderson High School Athletic Booster Club. VEP members and their families and friends are invited to participate.

What: **Golf Tournament**

When: May 7, 2001

Where: Santa Teresa Golf Club

First Tee Off at 10:00 a.m.

Dinner following golf.

For more information call Louie Aldama at 360-9315 or Linda Lee at 535-6340, ext 123, or 266-4606.

How good is your roof?

-Carol Ochs ()*

Many of us are working hard just to keep a roof over our heads--but how good is that roof? With April showers on the way, it might pay you to find out.



If you are in the market for a house, remember there's more to a dream home than a stunning floor plan. Replacing a roof can cost thousands of dollars, depending on the size of the roof and the style of materials you select. A leaking roof also can lead to messy and costly water damage.

The National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA) says asphalt shingles remain the overwhelming roofing choice for U.S. homes. The shingles come with warranties ranging from about 20- to 40-years. However, Dave Flickinger, the NRCA's technical services manager, says those warranties "are not indicative of service life. The warranty covers material only. It has to be installed correctly." He says certain things will void a warranty, "such as hail and high winds." Flickinger also points out that 40-year shingles are relatively new and have not yet stood the test of time. In addition, warranties may not be transferable to new owners.

According to Flickinger, when you're sizing up a roof, "general appearance is the first clue." He warns that you could be headed for problems "if you see shingles that are buckled, curled (turning up at the edges), or clawing (turning down at the edges)." A lot of shingle granules in your gutters is another bad sign.

The Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association says sooner or later, every roof will need to be replaced, usually because of weathering. It suggests that if a residential roof is more than 20-years old, it is a "prime candidate" for re-roofing.

When buying a new home, getting a routine home inspection is no guarantee you won't have trouble down the road. Flickinger says an inspector "standing at

curbside and looking up" may not spot some major problems, such as penetrations that could cause leaks. In Flickinger's words, "you must walk the roof" to determine its condition, and "it's doubtful they'll walk it."

In fact, the American Society of Home Inspectors says in its Standards of Practice that inspectors are not required to walk on the roofing or inspect areas that are not "readily accessible."

If you already own a home, the NRCA recommends you check your roof each spring and fall to spot potential problems early. Its web site includes a chart to record your inspection. The site also contains some ladder safety tips and a safety video.

Should you need to replace your roof, asphalt shingles fall into two categories, based on their reinforcement—organic or fiberglass. Generally, fiberglass-reinforced shingles are classified as more fire resistant.

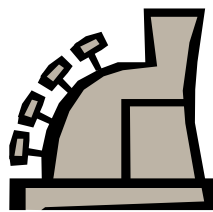
For years, the flat, three-tab asphalt shingle has been the industry standard, but Flickinger says there is a growing market for what are known as dimensional, architectural or laminate shingles. While they don't offer a construction advantage, Flickinger says they give a roof a rougher appearance which is "aesthetically a bit nicer looking."

Shingles also come in a variety of colors. "Lighter colors are very popular down south," according to Flickinger. "The hope is going with lighter material can reduce energy load." Although shingle color can make some difference, Flickinger says studies of temperature data have not found a huge difference.

If you do find yourself in need of a new roof, the NRCA recommends you do your homework before hiring a roofing contractor:

- Check for a contractor's permanent place of business, telephone and tax identification number.
- Check references from prior customers.
- Ask for proof of insurance (liability and worker's compensation). Get copies for your records.
- Ask the contractor about material and workmanship warranties. Get copies for your records.

[() Ed. Note: This article was taken from Brian Bonnifield's online monthly Real Estate Update.]*



Westfield Shoppingtown Oakridge

-Larry Green (*)

Westfield Shoppingtown Oakridge has had a busy year: new store openings, the new San Jose Community Police Center, our best Westfield Works Wonders event, and the ongoing progress of our redevelopment plans. Of course, the recent closure of Wards was disappointing, although it has long been anticipated by the industry.

Year 2000 was a record year for us and we believe this will continue throughout 2001.

Oakridge continues to buzz with excitement and life. We continue to see strong growth in sales including specialty shops up 8.2% and total mall sales up 11.6% in gross volumes for the month of February. Macy's and Sears are busting at the seams and continue with very good monthly increases. The closure of Wards was somewhat anticipated by the industry and many of our customers, thus we believe an opportunity exists for a new retailer to bring quality, excitement, and strong brand recognition to the market.

During the prior year we opened eleven (11) new retailers at Oakridge. Most recently we welcomed a newly expanded and remodeled "The Picture People", a child's portrait studio and the ever trendy new concept produced by Millers Outpost called Anchor Blue. In the former Eddie Bauer location we will open an American Eagle Outfitters during the middle of April. On top of the new Old Navy, GAP, and GAP Kids, these stores are great additions to Oakridge's family market. Old Navy and GAP have been phenomenal draws to the center with their fun atmosphere, promotional advertising, and their very friendly sales associates. Over the coming months we will continue to work to strengthen our retailer offering.

Our pending redevelopment plans continue to move forward. We have been working very hard over the past months in coming up with a design that will strengthen our community ties and create a true first class shopping and entertainment experience. We believe our efforts have been rewarded and the feedback from the retail community is very exciting. It is our desire to commence the redevelopment program during the next seven (7) to twelve (12) months, although we are looking for ways to initiate components of the project in advance of that timetable.

Overall, we continue to be very excited about Westfield Shoppingtown Oakridge. Business at the center continues to be strong and encouraging. Interest in the redevelopment program is high. Customer satisfaction with our newer retailers Old Navy, GAP, GAP Kids, Lundstrom Jewelers, Lids, Rave, The Children's Place, Bombay, Bakers, King of Knives, and Ann Taylor Loft has been overwhelmingly positive. We are all looking forward to a satisfying year serving our customers.

[() Ed. Note: Larry Green is Development Director for Westfield Corporation, Inc., Los Angeles.]*

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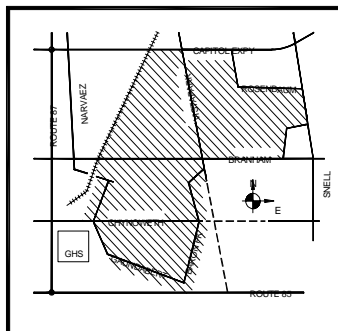
[Http://sites.netscape.net/hoavep](http://sites.netscape.net/hoavep)

Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance and improvement in its membership area as well as to active involvement in civic affairs. This newsletter is mailed monthly to all members in good standing, to our advertisers, and to schools and government officials serving our membership area. For membership or paid advertisement information, contact our Treasurer or write to the address listed above.

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